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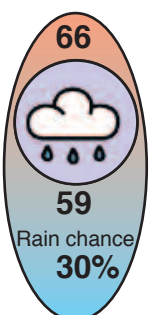
Feb. 9, 2018

'Learning the ropes'

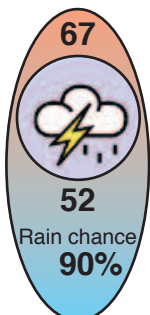
Air assault students rapel down a slanted wall under the guidance of instructors at Fort Polk's Air Assault compound Feb. 5. For more pictures see page 5 of today's Guardian. Story and graduation coverage in the Feb. 16 issue of the Guardian.



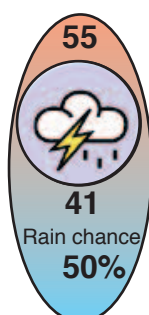
Weekend weather



Today



Saturday



Sunday

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Viewpoint

Fort Polk's Focus: Excellent customer service

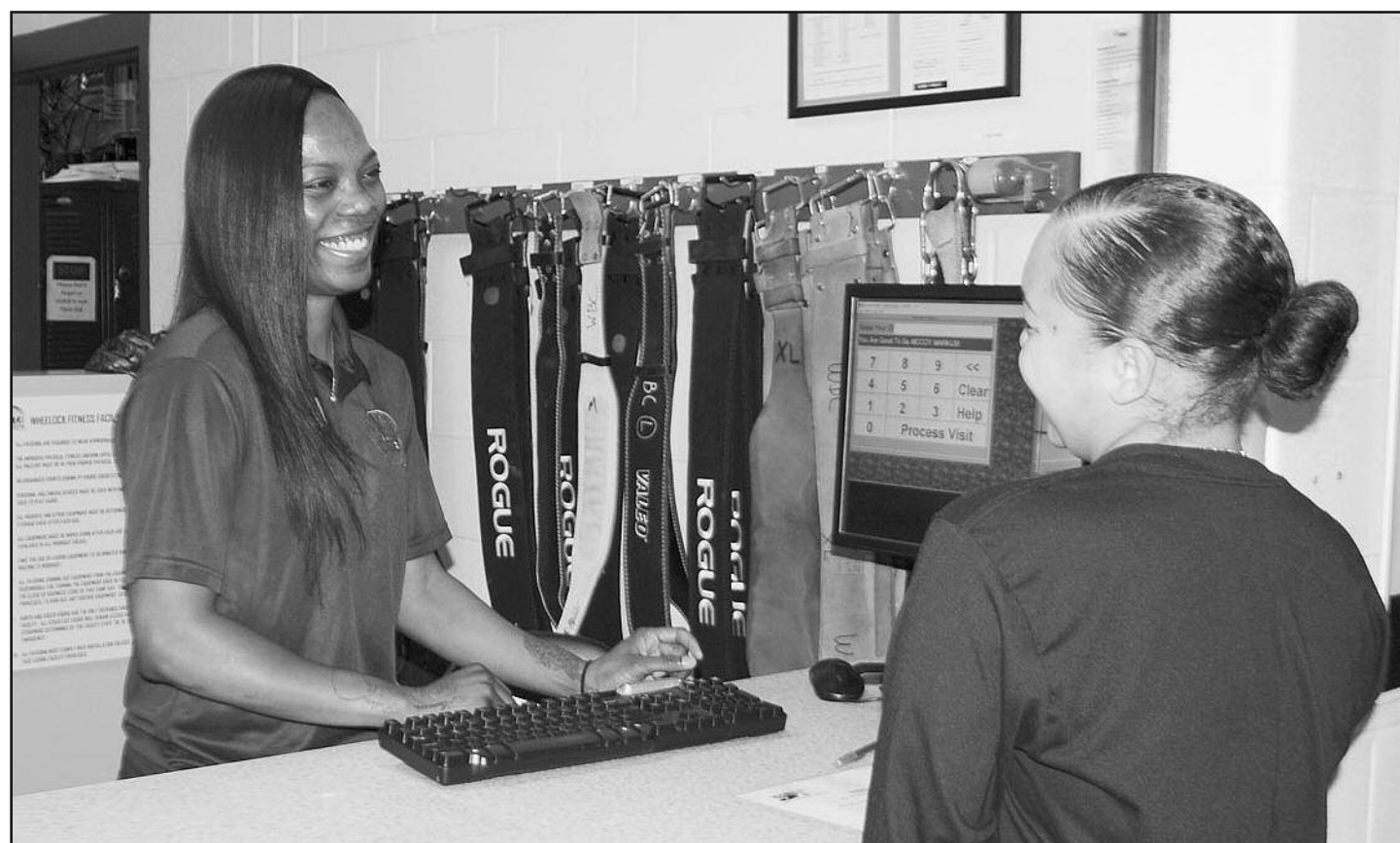
Each week in 2018, Guardian staff visits different Fort Polk facilities and service providers to ask members of the community about their experiences with and opin-

ions about customer service, alternating between the views of the customer and the provider. Questions will change monthly.

Why is good customer service important?

Shateke Battle (left), recreational specialist for Fort Polk's Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation, assists a customer at Wheelock Bayou Fitness Center. Battle said good customer service means making people comfortable. "That way they enjoy their visit and it keeps them coming back," she said. The fitness center offers several cardio and strength

training machines as well as an indoor running track, classes, a personal trainer and other amenities. It is located at 7755 Georgia Ave., bldg 3350. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 5 a.m.-10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. For more information call 531-6795.



Guardian

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Briefs

Railroad work areas

Repair work on Fort Polk's railroad track components is ongoing with an expected completion date of April 30. Work includes drainage repairs, railroad tie replacements, subgrade repairs and the repair of the grade crossings.

There should be minimal impact to motorists and pedestrians.

The work requires some road closures, detours, and flagging operations to complete the repairs and for motorist safety. The following grade crossings are ongoing and scheduled:

■ New Jersey Avenue is closed to through traffic with an estimated completion date of Thursday.

■ Chaffee Road grade crossing is scheduled Feb. 16-19 and Feb. 23-25. The road remains open with one lane of traffic by providing flagging operations during construction periods.

■ La. Hwy 467 grade crossing is scheduled Feb. 16-19 and Feb. 23-25. The road will remain open with one lane of traffic by providing flagging operations.

Military spouse job fair

Fort Polk's Employment Readiness Program hosts a Military Spouse Employment Partnership Job Fair Feb. 16 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Army Community Service, bldg 920.

Participating employers include AE-COM, Lowes, Central Texas College, First Command, Goodwill and Navy Federal Credit Union.

For more information call 531-6922.

Garrison All Hands

Garrison employees are reminded that the Garrison All Hands Brief is today at 2:30 p.m. at the Main Post Chapel.

All garrison employees are encouraged to attend.

BJACH holiday hours

Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital clinics and ancillary services (laboratory, radiology and outpatient pharmacy) will be open from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Feb. 16. The outpatient pharmacy is now located in Annex A (transition building outside of Entrance A. Parking is available in the lower level transition parking lot, adjacent to Annex A.

Clinics and ancillary services will be closed Feb. 17-19.

The emergency room and inpatient services are open 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

JRTC, Fort Polk changes leadership Feb. 28

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

FORT POLK, La. -- The Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk changes command as Maj. Gen. Gary Brito moves on to take charge of the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Georgia. The ceremony takes place Feb. 28 at 10 a.m. at Warrior Field.

Brito will be replaced by Brig. Gen. Patrick D. Frank, currently deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Cadet Command at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Prior to his assignment at Fort Knox, Frank was the 1st Infantry Division deputy commanding general and Fort Riley acting senior com-

mander. Previous assignments include deputy commanding general (support), 1st Infantry Division; executive officer to the commander ISAF/Resolute Support; executive officer to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army; commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team "Spartans," 10th Mountain Division – deployed in the surge of forces to Kandahar, Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom XII-XIII; 1st Infantry Division G-3; commander of 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry "Black Lions," 4th IBC, 1st Infantry Division — deployed to Baghdad as a part of the surge during Operation Iraqi Freedom-V; aide to the Secretary of the Army; deputy G-3, brigade S-3, and battalion S-3, 101st Airborne Division; company commands in the 10th Mountain Division, and a tour with the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany.

Frank has participated in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, Operation Iraqi Freedom I and V, Operation Enduring Freedom XII-XIII and XVII, and Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

He graduated from St. Bonaventure University in New York, and was commissioned as an infantry officer. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Finance; a Master in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University; a Master in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College; and a Master in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Frank's awards include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Ranger Tab, Air Assault and Airborne Wings, and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.



Frank



Feed me

The garrison command group has placed two suggestion boxes, one inside the lobby of headquarters, bldg 350, the other in the lobby of bldg 250 (In and Out Processing Center). They are there for anyone who lives and works on Fort Polk to offer suggestions on how to improve garrison services. You don't have to record your name — suggestions are completely anonymous. If any of the suggestions are adopted by the command, they'll be posted to the JRTC and Fort Polk Face book page.

GARRISON COMMAND GROUP



Leap of faith

Maneuver Center of Excellence leaders, families and friends of Ranger Class 02-18 gather to watch the Rangers in Action demonstration at Victory Pond, Fort Benning, Georgia, Jan. 26. The United States Army Ranger School is a 61-day combat leadership course oriented toward small-unit tactics. It is open to Soldiers (commissioned officer, warrant officer, or non-commissioned officers), Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in the U.S. armed forces, as well as select allied military students.

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

1st SFAB combat medic looks forward to first deployment

By **Spc. NOELLE E. WIEHE**

1st Security Force Assistance Brigade

FORT POLK, La. — Army Sgt. Randy Kieso, a combat medic with 3rd Battalion, 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, had not had the opportunity to deploy since enlisting in 2010. When he heard his new unit would be conducting missions in Afghanistan in the spring of 2018, he was ready for the opportunity.

Kieso said he was certain he wanted to serve in the military since he was 6 years old. "It's essentially been a lifelong thing I've wanted to do; this has always been what I wanted to do," he said.

When he first entered a recruiter's office he explored the idea of serving as an infantryman, but decided he would serve as a combat medic instead.

Combat medics are tasked with providing emergency medical treatment on the battlefield, providing basic primary care and health protection and evacuation, according to the Army's recruiting website.

"I like helping people — being the one that people look to for assistance," Kieso said.

He said he looked up to his uncle, Stuart Fabian, who served as a medic during his time as a Navy corpsman. His uncle shared his knowledge and experiences, which motivated Kieso to become a medic in the Army.

Train, advise, assist

The Army announced the first deployment of the 1st SFAB in spring of 2018. Stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 1st SFAB has been tasked with training, advising and assisting Afghan forces. SFABs are specialized units whose core mission is to conduct advise-and-assist operations with allied and partner nations.

Kieso said he never deployed with his previous units due to unfortunate timing — he would

arrive when the units were between rotations. He said he joined the 1st SFAB looking for "something new."

"I've never gotten a chance to deploy and this was a for-sure thing, so that was a motivator to join," he said.

When he began researching the 1st SFAB, Kieso said he was looking for a broadening assignment and could only find small bits of information, which he found intriguing.

Since joining the unit, he said he has enjoyed training with different components of the Army — from field artillery to intelligence Soldiers.

"It's nice being able to have people with all sorts of different MOSs, all sorts of experiences right next to each other," he said. "Drawing from that has been an awesome experience. When I leave, I'll have a better understanding of how other systems in the Army work, as well. If I understand how other jobs in the Army work, it can help me hone in on what exactly it is that I need to do and what I bring to the fight as a medic."

Not a standard mission

Though this will be his first deployment, Kieso said he feels confident in his team, especially following the events and training they went through during the month-long Joint Readiness Training Exercise here.

"JRTC has definitely brought our team into being a team," he said.

Kieso said he has found value in teaching oth-

er people to be able to perform combat medic tasks — specifically teaching the simulated Afghan National Army during the rotation — and working to improve their combat effectiveness.

"I've loved it; it's been awesome," he said. "It is not your standard (duties)."

Staff Sgt. Cody Standridge, a section leader with 1st SFAB, said everybody in the team has multiple hats to wear — between staff functions

in the U.S. force and their foreign partner force, the 1st SFAB operates the way a battalion staff would while at a tactical level — each Soldier has their job to perform.

During his time with the 1st SFAB at JRTC, Standridge said Kieso has worn several hats as he's performed tasks outside his normal job to help his team.

"He steps outside of his role here at the 1st SFAB," he said. "Personnel functions (are) not something that a (medic) typically does. On our team, though, it's been critical to have him have that staff power, along with (running) the entire medical training portion for both our

partner courses and the team."

For their upcoming deployment, Kieso said his team will work fairly autonomously, so cohesion and camaraderie within the unit is conducive to the mission.

"Our team, if we're not doing some big training exercise, we're always doing some internal training to make us better — building teamwork; building individual team tactics, techniques, and procedures internal to us," he said. "That has brought us a lot closer."

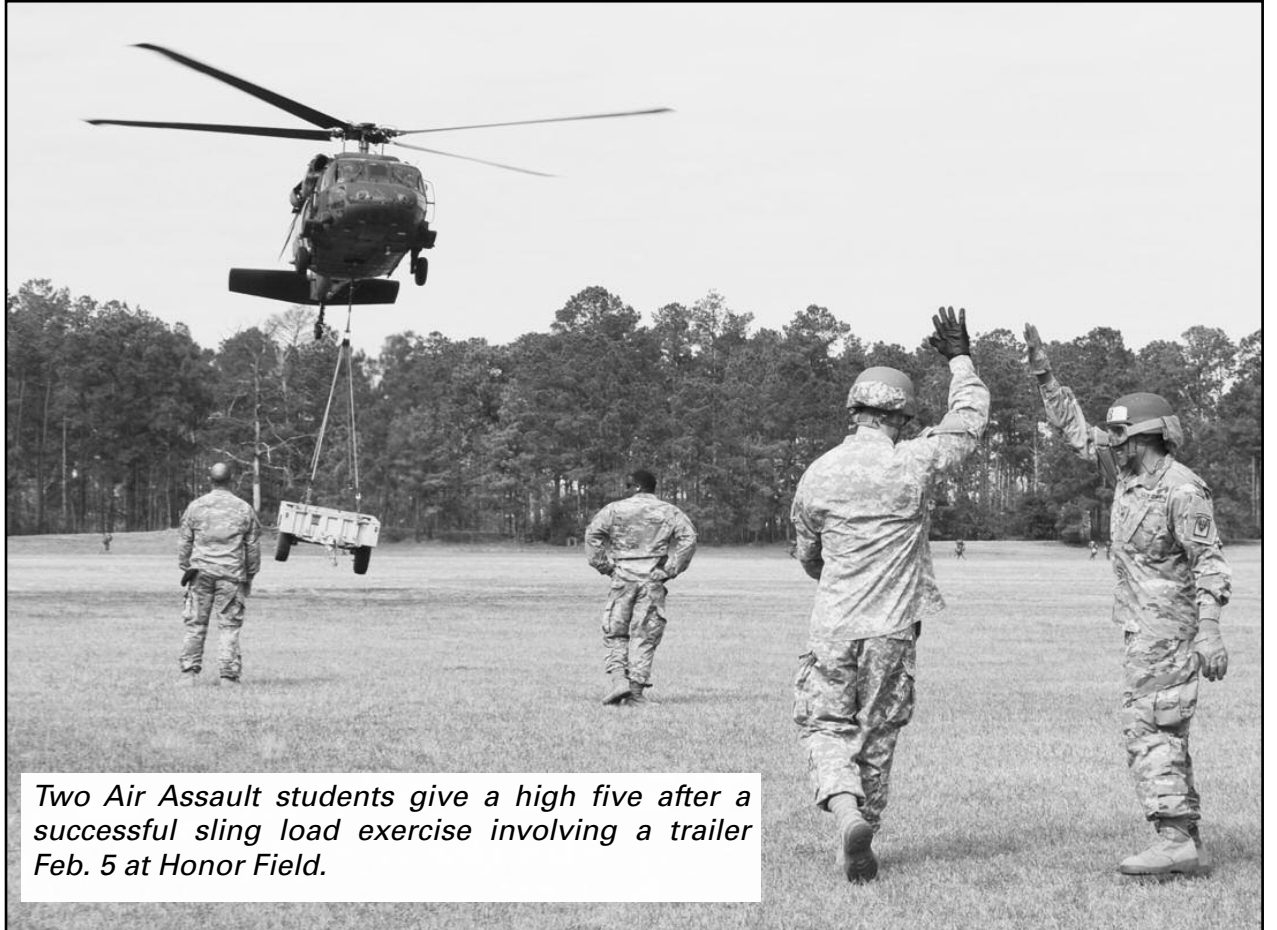


Kieso

Fort Polk hosts Air Assault course mobile team

By **JEAN DUBIEL**
Guardian staff writer

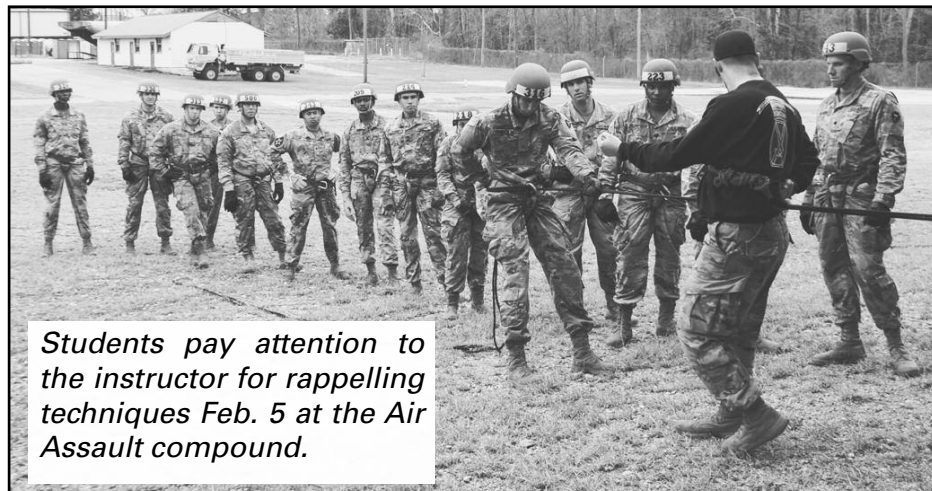
FORT POLK, La. — A mobile training team from the Light Fighter School at Fort Drum, New York, has been running an Air Assault course at Fort Polk's invitation since Feb. 2. Here are a few photos of some of the training. The graduation takes place Friday at 11 a.m at Honor Field. Look for a follow up article in the Feb. 16 edition of the Guardian.



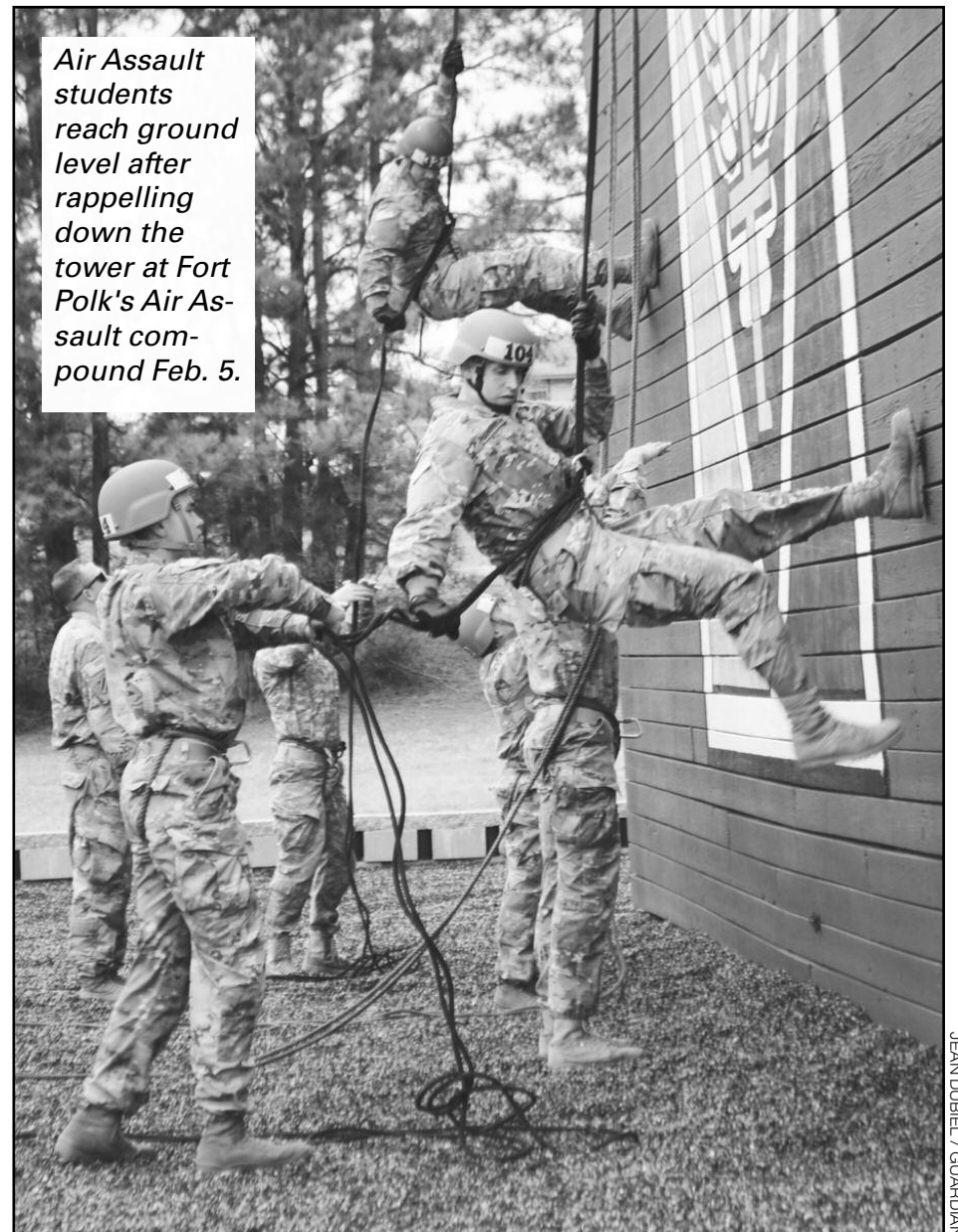
Two Air Assault students give a high five after a successful sling load exercise involving a trailer Feb. 5 at Honor Field.

Above: An Air Assault student is graded on his ability to ensure cargo is ready for sling load operations during the Air Assault course at Fort Polk Feb. 2.

Below: Two Air Assault students make their way down a slanted wall during the rappel phase of the Air Assault course Feb. 5.



Students pay attention to the instructor for rappelling techniques Feb. 5 at the Air Assault compound.



Air Assault students reach ground level after rappelling down the tower at Fort Polk's Air Assault compound Feb. 5.

Please see **Air Assault**, page 6

SFL-TAP: Why transitioning Soldiers make great entrepreneurs

SFL-TAP

FORT POLK, La. — When a Soldier transitions from Army active duty to the civilian world, they are presented a host of new career opportunities. It's like being back in school with a counselor asking what you want to do for the rest of your life. The door is wide open and now you are sifting through the options.

Soldiers in will have this same type of conversation with a career counselor 18 months prior to transition or 24 months prior to retirement. Their options are endless, since Soldiers have a wealth of knowledge, job skills, and experience to draw upon. From retirement, to finding a second ca-

reer, to going to school, to gaining a vocational education, and even to considering entrepreneurship, the Army supports Soldiers in their plan for future civilian life.

One of these efforts is an optional career track available to Soldiers and their spouses during transition. Offered by the Small Business Administration, the Boots to Business two-day workshop during a Soldier's Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program teaches business ownership skills. B2B, as it's known, is a foundational class that sets a future veteran entrepreneur up for success.

While the SBA and SFL-TAP can help a transitioning Soldier define their future career goals,

the true skills needed for entrepreneurship are already within the Soldier. Years of Army experience provides Soldiers the talents they need to be successful.

1. Leadership — The Army teaches Soldiers to be leaders. Soldiers understand how to make decisions, manage others, maintain order and complete tasks. Entrepreneurship requires all of these elements.

A 2017 RAND Corporation study found that veterans and service members have various non-technical skills that help them succeed in civilian culture, including management and supervisory experience, as well as teamwork skills. Running a business, especially a start-up, often requires one person to manage the tasks of multiple departments. Military leadership skills enable a veteran entrepreneur to lead a company and chart the direction it moves forward.

2. Drive — As the Army says, "get motivated." There is motivation behind serving in the military — both for personal and professional reasons. The idea of doing what you are needed to complete a task or mission is the backbone of a Soldier's success. That type of focus, passion, and motivation is needed as an entrepreneur. An Army veteran's military experience creates the drive needed for the long hours and tough decisions faced as an entrepreneur.

3. Purpose — During transition, Soldiers who find their passion and meaning in their next job stay longer and grow in the position. They find their purpose. A transitioning Soldier understands greater purpose from being in the military. Finding a way to help others in the civilian sector through entrepreneurship is what owning a business is all about and can provide that sense of purpose again. Your product or service could change a customer's life. A transitioning Soldier can set themselves up for personal success by exploring business ventures that provide purpose to others and themselves.

If a transitioning Soldier is interested in learning more about entrepreneurship, call SFL-TAP at (337) 531-1591. For more information on Boots to Business, visit sbavets.force.com.

SFL-TAP can also be found on Facebook (@FortPolkSFLTAP), Twitter (@SFLTAP), LinkedIn (Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program Connection Group), and YouTube (SFL-TAP Television). You can follow Boots to Business on Facebook and Twitter (@Boots2Business).

Looking for work? Take note of events

SFL-TAP

FORT POLK, La. — The Soldier For Life-Transition Assistance Program, located in bldg 4275, 7438 California Ave. at Polk Army Airfield, hosts events for Soldiers 24 months from retirement or 18 months from ETS.

Upcoming employer days include:

- **Tuesday:** Manpower, 8:30 a.m.-noon.
- **Wednesday:** Louisiana Workforce Commission, 8:30a.m.-noon.
- **Thursday:** Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and The Exchange, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

Upcoming events include:

- **Entrepreneur Track (Boots 2 Business)** — Two-day track event for those interested in starting their own business, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- **Career Skills Program Briefing** — Informational briefing every Wednesday from noon-12:30 p.m. Soldiers ETSing or retiring from the Army after Oct. 1 with an Honorable Discharge may be eligible to complete technical training while still on active duty.
- **Job Interview Preparation Workshop** — This workshop will discuss and practice interview skills, how to negotiate salary with local employers and how to dress for an interview. The workshop is held Feb. 20 from 8:30- 11:30 a.m.

- **Accessing Higher Education Track** — Two-day track event helps Soldiers learn more about their college options, Feb. 20-21, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

- **Advanced Resume Workshop** — This workshop will discuss and practice writing a tailored resume for a specific job, Feb. 21, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

- **Job Fair** — Feb. 22 at 10 a.m. at the Warrior Community Activity Center, 67 employers are signed up.

- **Career Technical Training Track** — This workshop offers a unique opportunity to identify skills, increase awareness of training and credentialing programs, and develop an action plan to achieve career goals, Feb. 27-28 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

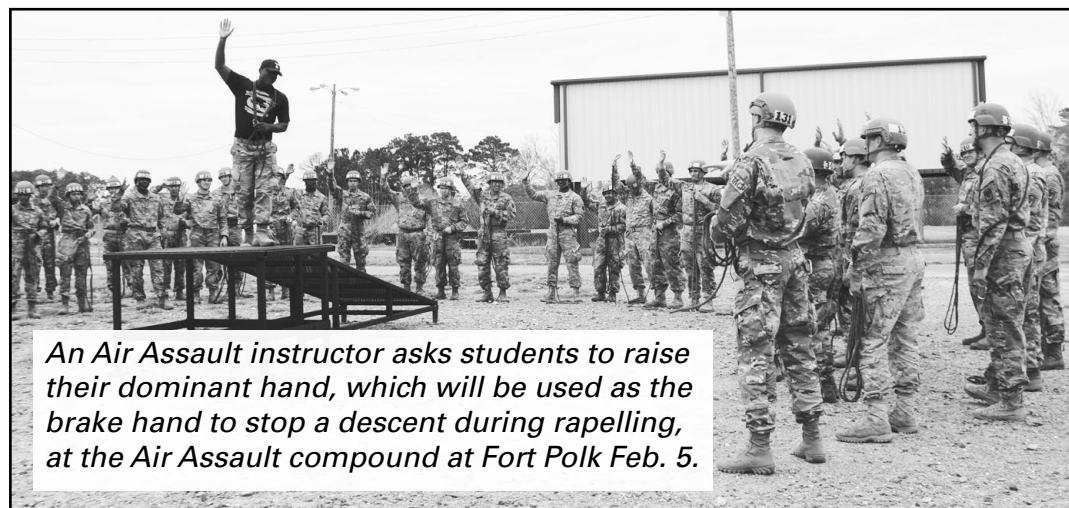
- **Federal Employment Workshop** — This seminar will discuss how to find a federal position, read vacancy announcements, apply for positions, and how to create a federal resume, March 9, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

- **Ask a Special Agent Information Session** — Two information sessions where you will learn about the Special Agent career and Student Internship Program with the U.S. Department of State, May 23, 10-11 a.m. or 1-2 p.m.

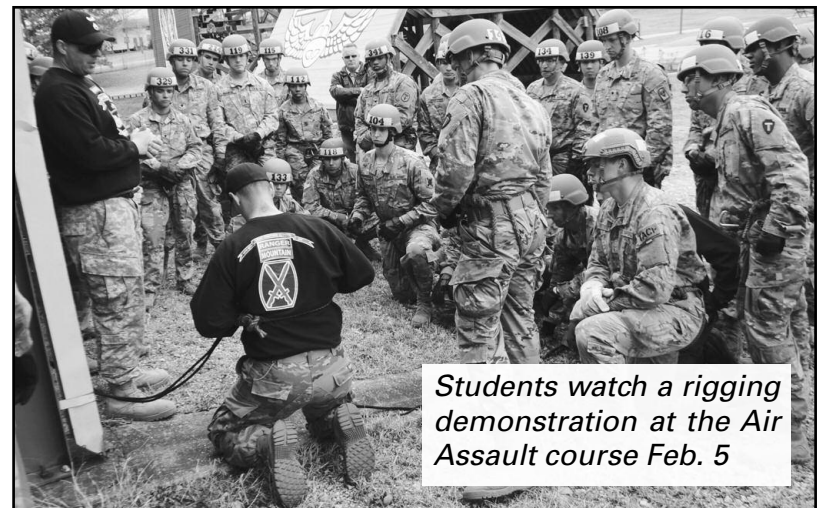
For more information or to register for events call 531-1591, visit the SFL-TAP office or check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FortPolkSFLTAP.

Air Assault

Continued from page 5



An Air Assault instructor asks students to raise their dominant hand, which will be used as the brake hand to stop a descent during rappelling, at the Air Assault compound at Fort Polk Feb. 5.



Students watch a rigging demonstration at the Air Assault course Feb. 5

BOSS scores touchdown with winning Super Bowl party

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

FORT POLK, La. — As football season came to an end, it seemed like the perfect opportunity for Fort Polk's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers to celebrate with a Super Bowl party filled with games, food, prizes and, of course, viewing the big game.

The fun began at 3 p.m. Feb. 4 in the parking lot of the Home of Heroes Recreation Center. Soldiers trickled in for hamburgers and hot dogs right off the grill as a DJ played music in the background. Those not eating could be found talking in groups and participating in games like water pong played with large trashcans and a dodge ball, as well as a beanbag toss.

Cpl. Devon Douglas, BOSS president, said the overcast skies and cooler temperatures may have put a slight damper on the outdoor activities leading up to the big game, but it didn't stop the Soldiers from having fun. "We have Soldiers here despite the weather and they are having a good time. By the time the game starts, I think this is going to be a successful event and a wonderful turnout," said Douglas.

Douglas said he has watched the Fort Polk BOSS program grow as he participated in its many volunteer opportunities and events. "I believe this program has excelled at successfully continuing to grow and get better. My goal as president is to carry on that progress," he said.

One of the ways he plans to do that is by maintaining a strong focus on volunteering. "As an organization, I believe it's imperative that we seize volunteer opportunities both on and off-post cheerfully and with enthusiasm."

The other purpose of BOSS, said Douglas, is to offer a place for Soldiers to relax, have fun and make friends. "It is important that we keep morale high. Soldiers have a stressful job and we want to give them a chance to socialize with their friends, as well as make new ones," he said.

Douglas would like to see more unit participation in the future. "I would like to start doing

Please see **BOSS**, page 8



ANGIE THORNE / GUARDIAN

An Eagles fan celebrates a touchdown Feb. 4 at the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Super Bowl party held at the Home of Heroes Recreation Center.



Soldiers relax, joke around and start grilling the food for the BOSS Super Bowl party Feb. 4 before the big game begins.



Joshua McDonnell makes his bean bag throw count during a bean bag toss game as Hector Baeza looks on.



Michael Ater takes a turn at trying to throw the winning shot as his teammate, Danny Oquendo clears away waste baskets that have been successfully hit during a large scale game of pong Feb. 4



Army Medicine in thick of war on antibiotic-resistant bacteria

By RONALD W. WOLF

Army Medicine

An important battle is underway. It involves — rather than armies of people — armies of microbes — bacteria and viruses.

The weapons used in this war are antibiotics and vaccines. For antibiotics in particular, however, increasing resistance to these drugs has been a growing and serious problem for at least 20 years and a topic of discussion for more than half a century by health-care planners.

Why is this important to the Army? Soldiers — and all other service members — may deploy around the world on short notice to areas where disease is a threat, and potential threats to the health of troops must be identified. Medical experience states that Soldiers take longer to recover from infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, those infections can cause death and the resources involved in treatment are expensive.

Illnesses that were once easily treatable with antibiotics are becoming more difficult to cure and expensive to treat. For example, infections from common antibiotic-resistant foodborne bacteria, such as Salmonella, are a danger, and these infections can cause life-threatening illnesses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls antibiotic resistance “one of the world’s most pressing public health problems.”

The World Health Organization has cautioned that it is possible that a “post-antibiotic era” may be coming where minor infections — currently easily treated with common antibiotics — may become deadly. A number of national or international organizations are funding research on this medical threat.

Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die each year because of these infections. Many more people die from other conditions that are complicated by antibiotic-resistant infections.

Soldiers who deploy to areas of the world where antibiotic-resistant bacteria are widespread are at risk for dangerous bacterial infections. Just as importantly, those troops may come home carrying drug-resistant or difficult to treat infections.

Issues with this problem are well documented.

Troops returning from Iraq starting in 2003 and through at least 2010 came home with difficult to treat bacterial infections.

During that period, although no American Soldiers from the Iraq war died from the bacteria (*Acinetobacter baumannii*), at least five very ill patients that were in the same hospitals as the infected Soldiers themselves became infected and died. Underlying illnesses may have contributed to the deaths of those patients, but that’s part of the problem. Individuals who are already ill are especially susceptible to life-threatening complications from antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

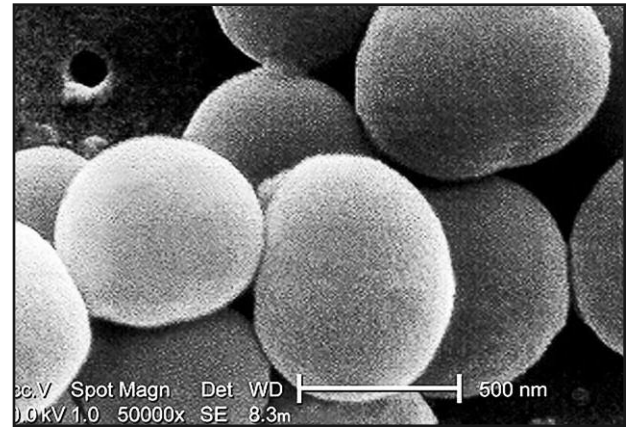
Getting a handle on these dangerous organisms is especially critical to protect the safety of Soldiers and Family members. Bacteria have natural defenses that let them shrug off many antibiotics, and they are also good at adapting to new drugs.

Even sterilizing surfaces in medical treatment facilities is a challenge. Bacteria are extremely resilient and can live on surfaces for days. Even hospitals are a threat for spreading infection because bacteria can lie in wait on bed rails, tables or other surfaces and infect patients unless disinfection practices are diligent and thorough.

Army Medicine has been focused on this problem for a number of years. In 2009, the Multidrug-Resistant Organism Repository and Surveillance Network (MRSN) stood up under the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. WRAIR is the largest and most diverse biomedical research laboratory in the Department of Defense.

The mission of the MRSN is to coordinate analysis and management of antibiotic resistance across the entire military health system. This effort helps military treatment facilities share information, optimize standard practices for infection control and patient safety, identify an outbreak of a pathogen earlier, and make more appropriate antibiotic selections for patients.

More recently, the MRSN became a key part of the Department of Defense Antimicrobial Resistance and Monitoring Research Program (ARMoR). Managing antibiotic-resistant bacteria and related programs is a tri-service effort; ARMoR includes DoD hospital laboratories, clinicians and infection control staff; public health reporting groups; Navy and Air Force public health data collection programs; and national policy groups.



Changes to what are considered effective and prudent use of antibiotics are critical to ensuring safety and health. A shift in the culture of how antibiotics are prescribed by providers and the expectations of patients need to be managed better.

Overprescribing antibiotics by providers when they aren’t sure what a patient has or because a patient asks for them, regardless of actual need, have contributed to this problem of antibiotic-resistance. In addition, antibiotics fight bacteria and have no effect on viruses.

Here are some recommendations:

- Use antibiotics only as prescribed by your provider.

- Take the appropriate daily dose for the entire course of treatment.

- Do not take leftover antibiotics. Throw away unused antibiotics.

- Never take antibiotics prescribed for another person.

- Practice good hygiene. Wash hands regularly with soap and water, especially after using the toilet, before eating, before preparing food, and after handling uncooked meat.

- Use hand sanitizers, they are very effective in reducing bacteria and viruses.

- Ensure your children receive appropriate vaccinations.

Effective and prudent use of antibiotics and vaccines is critical to ensuring patients’ safety and health. Soldiers and their families should work as partners with their physicians to avoid unnecessary use of antibiotics. You can protect yourself by following their advice and using antibiotics only as directed by your healthcare provider.

BOSS

Continued from page 7

more events that tie into the units. That way, they’ll be supporting us and, in turn, we will be supporting them,” he said.

Bonifacio Zapata attended the BOSS Super Bowl party. He said it was good to get out of the barracks and meet people. “Everybody watches the Super Bowl, so it brings out all kinds of people to get to know and have fun with,” he said.

Zapata said morale is important because often Soldiers are away from Family and friends, so an event like this gives them a chance to make their own family. “This way I’m not stuck inside alone. Instead, I can get out and do

things for free. BOSS gives you a place you can be yourself and feel like you belong,” he said.

As the clock ticked closer to game time, Soldiers headed inside the rec center to snag a good seat.

Jessica Alvarez attended the celebration and said she enjoyed taking part in events like the Super Bowl party because it gives Soldiers, like herself, a safe place to get together with other single Soldiers.

“You can get isolated and struggle within your own unit. Sometimes it’s great to get together to have some fun and realize that maybe you aren’t alone in what you are feeling,” said Alvarez.



Watching the Super Bowl can make you hungry. It’s a good thing there’s plenty of game-time grub on hand.



Briefs

School lunches

The following school lunch menu is for Vernon Parish schools for Wednesday through Feb. 16. Meals are served with salad bar and choice of milk:

- **Wednesday:** Chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, green beans, chilled pear halves, roll.
- **Thursday:** Taco salad with chips, Mexican corn, taco salad cup, fruit.
- **Feb. 16:** Fish sticks, potato wedges, baked beans, orange wedges, hushpuppies.

Wine tasting

The Warrior Community Center, Mulligans and the Fort Polk Class VI store hosts their annual wine tasting event today from 6-9 p.m. Cost is \$20 and registration is required. Tickets can be purchased at the WCC and Mulligans. For more information call 531-4440 or polk.army.mwr.com

Story time, movie

Allen Memorial Library hosts a story time and movie, "Lady and the Tramp," Tuesday at 5 p.m. in the library. Registration required. Call 531-2665 for more information.

Thrift Boutique

Fort Polk's Thrift Boutique is located in bldg 2201 Alabama Avenue. Hours of operation are Tuesday from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Wednesday from noon-7 p.m., Thursday from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and the first Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. For more information call 537-0459.

Chapel service

Fort Polk's Main Post Chapel hosts Lenten mass/ashes services Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information call 531-2669.

Mardi Gras zone

Enjoy watching the Alexandria Mardi Gras parade Sunday in the military zone, hosted by the Red Cross. The zone is located in the Sears parking lot at the Alexandria Mall. Military personnel and Families can enjoy free hot dogs and soda before the parade by presenting ID at the entrance. Gates open at 11 a.m. Coolers and chairs are welcome. For more information call 531-4783.

ERP class

Head to Fort Polk's Army Community Service Center March 6 to participate in "10 Steps to a Federal Job," from 5:30-9:30 p.m. For more information call 531-6922.

LHS students sign to play college football

By **ANGIE THORNE**

Guardian staff writer

LEESVILLE, La. — Great effort deserves ample reward. That's as true on the football field as it is in academics. Eight Leesville High School seniors have put in the work and were honored for it Feb. 7 with a celebration that focused on signing their Letters of Intent — which means signing with a United States National Collegiate Athletic Association college to attend and play collegiate football.

The event took place at the Leesville High School gym. Robert Causey, Leesville High School head football coach, took a moment before the students signed their letters of intent, to praise his players.

Social media and the Internet have expanded the recruiting scene, as well as the opportunities for student athletes such as these young men, said Causey. In the past, one or two students would sign with a college to play football, but eight students signing at once made this occasion a little different. "We wanted this to be a special occasion for the Family and friends of the players signing the letters that show their commitment to a university to be a student athlete," he said.

Causey emphasized that they were "student" athletes. "Football is a tool that gives these young men an opportunity to further their education. We don't know where this road is going to lead them, but what a wonderful opportunity to start them on their journey," said Causey.

He said being able to sign the Letters of Intent is a testament to the relentless effort the young men made individually and as part of a team. "Through the season they have personified hard work and dedication. This opportunity doesn't happen by chance. It's not luck. You have to put in the work, even on days you don't want to. This is their reward," said Causey.

Andrew Croker, 18, signed on to play with the McNeese State University Cowboys, Lake Charles.

Croker said his parents, Andrew and Jamie Croker Sr., have supported him in his pursuit of his football goals. Croker's dad is retired from the military after 23 years in the Judge Advocate General Corps.

"I'm stoked about signing with McNeese. This has been a dream come true. I've wanted to play college ball since I was little," he said.

Growing up in the military, Croker said he learned that nothing comes easy and he had to work hard if he wanted to achieve his ambitions and be a success.

"My dad was a leader in the Army and he taught me how to be a leader on the field," said Croker.

Donald Smith, 18, signed to attend and play football at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, Arkansas.

His parents are Master Sgt. Donald and Kenisha Smith. Smith is assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Smith said his dad has always helped him when things got tough, including in football.



Andrew Croker, 18, LHS senior, signs his Letter of Intent to play with McNeese State University as his teammates look on Feb. 7.



Players, Families and students took a moment to celebrate and eat cake after the signing ceremony.

"He knows how hard I worked to get where I am today," he said.

One of the things growing up in the military helped him with, according to Smith, was learning to be outgoing. "Moving around and constantly meeting new people really helped me become confident and I think that's helped me be successful," he said.

Smith's mom, Kenisha, said she was excited about her son's achievement. "With his dad deployed and me studying to become a nurse at Northwestern State University, it's sometimes been tough getting to Friday night games, but today has made it all worth while," she said.

Michael Ciacelli, 17, signed with Concordia University, Wisconsin.

His parents are Sgt. Dennis Ciacelli, assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and his spouse, Jennifer. Ciacelli's parents are very proud of him. How proud? "On a scale of one to 10, I'm at about 1,000," said his dad.

The other five LHS football players signing letters of intent include:

- Gabe Ellis, 17, signed his letter of intent to play for Buena Vista University in Iowa.

- Chris Vargas, 18, signed his letter of intent to play for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

- Kobe Joiner, 17, signed his letter of intent to play for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

- McKenzie Jackson, 18, signed his letter of intent to play for the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

- Sabian Matuu, 17, signed his letter of intent to play for East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, Texas.

"If we send them cards, it makes them happy,' says elementary student

NORTH POLK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FORT POLK, La. -- North Polk Elementary students worked with teachers and staff to create teddy bear themed Valentines, also known as "Teddy Grams," to send to deployed Soldiers for Valentine's Day. North Polk Elementary students are known as the "Teddy Bears."

The school has participated in monthly activities to support troops deployed from Fort Polk. Principal Elsee Ashworth said that North Polk Elementary's Military Family Life Counselor, Rachel Steele, has true passion and enthusiasm for working with the military and has been instrumental in supporting the school's military Families and monthly activities.

"Her energy for helping others is contagious," he said.

North Polk Elementary parents and command teams on Fort Polk have volunteered to provide additional support to show deployed Soldiers they are loved and never forgotten.

Kindergarten student Molly Dignazio said, "My mom says Soldiers, like my dad, have a big job to do. They get sad sometimes because they miss us. If we send them cards it makes them happy and they have a good day."



COURTESY OF NORTH POLK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Fort Polk youth can win turkey hunting slot

LDWF

FORT POLK, La. — Most people think about turkeys in the fall, but not if you're a turkey hunter! Spring is the peak time to bag a bird, and Fort Polk youth hunters have an opportunity to try their hand at it during the annual Fort Polk youth turkey hunt, scheduled for March 31.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife And Fisheries has made military dependent lottery applications available. Ten slots will be made available for active duty military dependent youths between the ages of 10 and 17 the day of the hunt. Application forms may be obtained from the Fort Polk Game Enforcement Office located in the Fort Polk Provost Marshal's Office. Each form must be filled out by an active-duty military parent or legal guardian assigned to Fort Polk. If the active-duty member is deployed, spouses may sign up their youth.

Applications must be submitted individually for one youth per form. Multiple applications

will result in disqualification. Completed forms must be submitted to:

LDWF

Fort Polk/Peason Military Youth Hunt
1213 North Lakeshore Drive
Lake Charles, La. 70609

Selection will be conducted through a random lottery drawing administered by the LDWF in mid March. Applications must be submitted no later than March 9 at 4:30 p.m., and successful applicants will be notified by mail. Lost or misplaced permits will not be reissued.

Members of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will guide participants chosen for the lottery hunt. One family member may accompany the youth and guide, but may not hunt. The participant must supply firearms and ammunition. Youth 16-17 years of age must comply with hunting license requirements. There is no charge to participate. For more information, contact Fort Polk Game Enforcement office at 531-5222 or LDWF at (337) 208-2208.



Chaplain: Marriage despair or happy life — your choice

By Chap. (Lt. Col.) RAYMOND FOLSOM

Main Post Chapel

Quality of marriage is never based on length of marriage, but how well you treat each other. I see couples who have lost their way. They have stopped demonstrating their love and the basic courtesies towards each other. Bad habits are started that cause a couple to move further and further apart emotionally, mentally and physically.

Every little bump becomes a major repair bill that increases loneliness and despair! Hours, months, and years of neglect and mean and nasty exchanges topped with demoralizing rejection will take its toll, even on the strongest soul.

There are levels of marriage despair but there is always hope! That hope is to embrace our spouse with words

of affirmation and acts of kindness. These qualities of godliness are the source of strength to build a strong and ready couple.

Use words of affirmation, not destruction. The "spoken word" can be life or death in our relationship. What is said may be the No. 1

reason we need the most forgiveness. That is why when we are angry, we need to hold our tongue. Take time to think about how you can say what needs to be said, in a respectful way, without pulling out the tongue dagger to cause more pain.

Words of encouragement, adoration and inspiration are always welcome. Encouraging each other may be exactly what is needed to get a couple through the day. Words of affirmation are soul food.

Perform acts of kindness, not selfishness. Our

first line of concern is always ourselves but in a marriage, it is not the most prudent relationship building technique. Doing things for your spouse that are unsolicited is important. If you feel loved

by your spouse, there are a lot of things that can be overlooked (1 Corinthians 13). Even the smallest acts of kindness could be exactly what is required: A kiss, holding hands, a

date night, a hug, helping and genuine listening — because listening builds intimacy.

Apart from unethical or illegal acts, marriage seems to be mostly about living with our spouse's "bad habits" or personality traits, and that is never a relationship builder. Condemning each other makes one person the judge and the other a criminal. We all have "shortcomings." This is where we love, pray and move on.

Godliness does not find itself in criticism but in words of encouragement. Godliness is not found in selfishness but treating each other with respect. Being a godly person makes for a "happy life."

Commentary

Looking for scholarship? Try Fisher House Foundation via DeCA

By MIKE PERRON

DeCA public affairs specialist

FORT LEE, Va. — The Defense Commissary Agency is still accepting applications through Feb. 17 for the 2018-2019 school year for the Fisher House Foundation's Scholarships for Military Children program.

Now entering its 18th year, the program was created to recognize the "contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community," according to the mission statement on the militaryscholar.org website.

At least one scholarship worth \$2,000 will be awarded at every commissary location where qualified applications are received.

Additional recipients will be selected on a pro-rated basis, so more scholarships will be award-

ed at those stores with larger numbers of applicants. A total of 700 scholarship grants will be awarded this year. Since its beginning, the program has awarded a total of 10,114 grants worth \$16.7 million to the sons and daughters of commissary patrons.

To qualify for consideration, applicants must be a dependent, unmarried child, younger than 21 — or 23, if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university — of a service member on active duty, a Reserve or Guard member, retiree or survivor of a military member who died while on active duty, or survivor of a retiree.

Applicants should ensure that they and their sponsor are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database and have a military ID card.

The applicant must attend or plan to attend an accredited college or university, full time, in the fall of 2018 or be enrolled in studies designed to

transfer to a four-year program.

Additional information, including the application itself as well as the question for the required essay, are available at www.militaryscholar.org.

Applications must be hand-delivered or shipped via the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery methods to the commissary where the applicant's family normally shops by Feb. 17. Applications cannot be emailed or faxed.

Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps service members and their families, administers the program.

Scholarship Managers, a national, nonprofit, scholarship management services organization, manages and awards the scholarships.

Militaryscholar.org hosts a new scholarship search tool called "Scholarships for Service," designed specifically to help the military and their family members find scholarships that best match their educational goals.

Take time to watch for signs of heart attack

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

FORT POLK, La. — February is Heart Health Month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. More than 600,000 Americans die of heart disease each year. That's one in every four deaths in this country.

The term "heart disease" refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type is coronary artery disease, which can cause heart attack. Other kinds of heart disease may involve the valves in the heart, or the heart may not pump well and cause heart failure. Some people are born with heart disease.

Anyone, including children, can develop heart disease. It occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time, reducing blood flow to the heart.

Smoking, eating an unhealthy diet and not getting enough exercise all increase your risk for having heart disease.

Having high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes also can increase your risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor about preventing

or treating these medical conditions. Symptoms vary depending on the type of heart disease, but may include:

- Chest pain or discomfort that doesn't go away after a few minutes.
- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck or back.
- Weakness, light-headedness, nausea or a cold sweat.
- Pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulder.
- Shortness of breath.

Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease in the U.S. Despite increases in awareness over the past decade, only 54 percent of women recognize that heart disease is their number one killer; it's the leading cause of death in women — about one in four female deaths is caused by heart disease.

Heart disease is also the leading cause of death for African American women. Among Hispanic women, heart disease and cancer cause roughly the same number of deaths each year. For American Indian or Alaska Native and Asian or Pacific Islander women, heart disease is



second only to cancer.

Screening

To reduce your chances of getting heart disease it's important to:

- Know your blood pressure. Having uncontrolled blood pressure can result in heart disease. High blood pressure has no symptoms so it's important to have your blood pressure checked regularly.
- Talk to your health-care provider about whether you should be tested for diabetes. Having uncontrolled diabetes raises your chances of heart disease.

- Quit smoking.
 - Discuss checking your cholesterol and triglycerides with your health-care provider.
 - Make healthy food choices. Being overweight and obese raises your risk of heart disease.
 - Limit alcohol intake to one drink a day.
 - Lower your stress level and find healthy ways to cope with stress.
- If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Find better ways to control stress for healthier heart

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Heart Healthy Month is commemorated throughout February, and stress levels can have an impact on cardiac health.

Strong emotions like fear, sadness, or other symptoms of depression are normal, as long as they are temporary and don't interfere with daily activities. If these emotions last too long or cause other problems, it's a different story.

Sometimes stress can be good. It can help you develop skills needed to manage potentially threatening situations. Stress can be harmful, however, when it is prolonged or severe enough to make you feel overwhelmed and out of control.

Physical or emotional tension are often signs of stress. They can be reactions to a situation that cause you to feel threatened or anxious.

Stress can be related to positive events (such as planning your wedding) or negative events (such as dealing with the effects of a natural disaster).

Symptoms of stress

Common reactions to a stressful event include:

- Disbelief and shock
- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Feeling numb
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of appetite
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Anger
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness and symptoms of depression

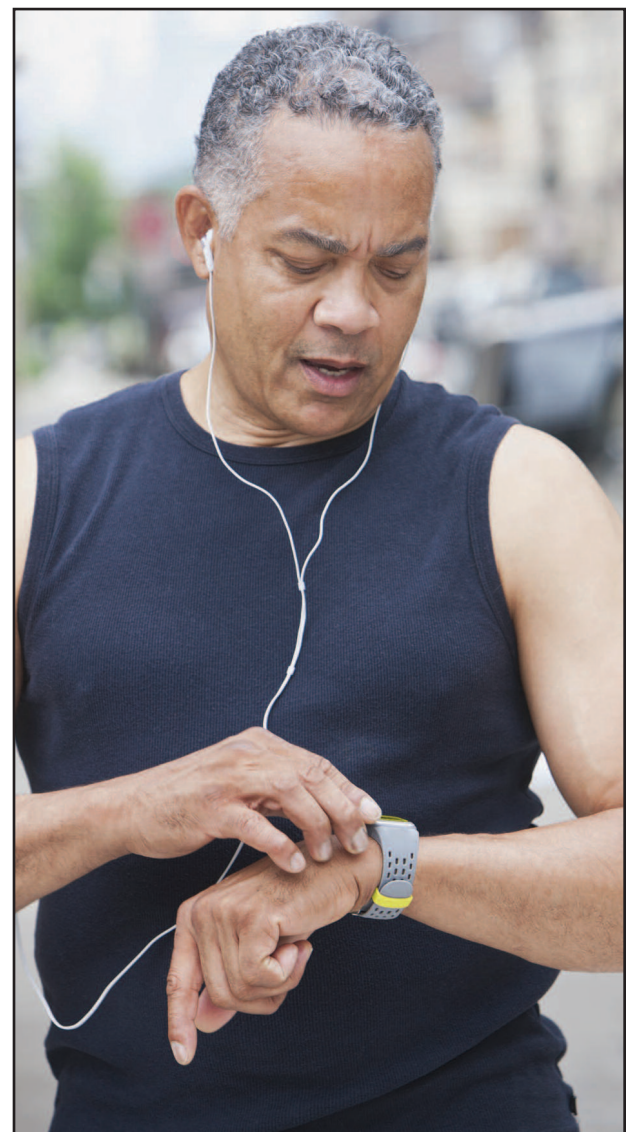
- Feeling powerless
- Crying
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems

- Trouble concentrating

Tips for self-care

The best ways to manage stress in hard times are through self-care.

- Avoid drugs and alcohol. They may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run drugs and alcohol can create more problems and add to your stress — instead of taking it away.
- Find support. Seek help from a partner, family member, friend, counselor, doctor, or clergyman. Having someone with a sympathetic, listening ear and sharing about your problems and stress can lighten the burden.
- Connect socially. After a stressful event, it is easy to isolate yourself. Make sure you are spending time with loved ones. Consider planning fun activities with your partner, children, or friends.
- Take care of yourself.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of sleep
- Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out — for example, treat yourself to a therapeutic massage
- Maintain a normal routine
- Stay active. Take your mind off your problems with activities like helping a neighbor, volunteering in the community and taking the dog on a walk. These can be positive ways to cope with stressful feelings



African-American troops fought to fight in World War I

By Col. RICHARD GOLDENBERG
New York National Guard

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y., — During World War I, when African-American National Guard Soldiers of New York's 15th Infantry Regiment arrived in France in December 1917, they expected to conduct combat training and enter the trenches of the western front right away to fight the enemy.

More than 380,000 African-Americans served in the Army during World War I, according to the National Archives. About 200,000 were sent to Europe. But more than half of those who deployed were assigned to labor and stevedore battalions. These troops performed essential duties for the American Expeditionary Force, building roads, bridges and trenches in support of the front-line battles.

Preparing docks, railway lines

In St. Nazaire, the New York National Guard Soldiers learned they would work to prepare the docks and railway lines to be a major port of entry for the hundreds of thousands of forces yet to arrive in France. The African-American regiment was a quick and easy source of labor, according to author Stephen Harris in his 2003 book "Harlem's Hell Fighters."

"First, (Army Gen. John J.) Pershing would have a source of cheap labor," Harris wrote. "Second, he wouldn't have to worry about what to do with black Soldiers, particularly when he might have to mix them in with white troops."

But the 15th Regiment's Soldiers had not signed up for labor. They were committed to fighting the Germans and winning the war.

"They had no place to put the regiment," said infantry Capt. Hamilton Fish, according to the Harris book. "They weren't going to put us in a white division, not in 1917, anyway; so our troops were sent in to the supply and services as laborers to lay railroad tracks. This naturally upset our men tremendously."

Regimental commander fights for troops

The regiment's best advocate to get into the fight was their commander, Col. William Hayward.

"It was time for us to try to do something towards extricating ourselves from the dirty mess of pick-swinging and wheel barrel trundling that we were in," Hayward had said to Capt. Arthur Little, commander of the regimental band, according to Jeffrey Sammons in his 2014 book "Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War."

"We had come to France as com-



The Harlem Hellfighters, around 1918. More than 380,000 African Americans served in WWI.



A military poster promoting the work of stevedores at the St. Nazaire port of debarkation for American Expeditionary Forces during World War I in France in 1918. The African-American 369th Infantry Regiment arrived at St. Nazaire in December 1917 and performed labor duties before their onward integration and training for combat under French command in March 1918.

NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL

bat troops, and, apparently, we were in danger of becoming labor troops," Hayward said.

Hayward argued his case in a letter to Pershing, outlining the regiment's mobilization and training, and followed up immediately with a personal visit to Pershing's headquarters.

Band helps sway opinion

He would bring with him the regiment's most formidable weapon in swaying opinion: The regimental band, lauded as one of the finest in the entire Expeditionary Force.

While the regiment literally laid the tracks for the arrival of the 2

million troops deploying to France, the regimental band toured the region, performing for French and American audiences at rest centers and hospitals. The 369th band was unlike any other performance audiences had seen or heard before, Harris noted. The regimental band is credited with introducing jazz music to France during the war.

The military band would frequently perform a French march, followed by traditional band scores such as John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever."

"And then came the fireworks," said Sgt. Noble Sissle, band vocalist

and organizer, in the Harris account, as the 369th Band would play as if they were in a jazz club back in Harlem. After some three months of labor constructing nearby railways to move supplies forward, the regiment's Soldiers learned that they had orders to join the French 16th Division for three weeks of combat training.

Heading for the front

They also learned they had a new regimental number as the now-renamed 369th Infantry Regiment. Not that it mattered much to the

Please see **Fight**, page 14

Paratrooper makes first jump in more than 30 years

By Pfc. JOSSELYN FUENTES

173rd Airborne Bde

VICENZA, Italy — It is uncertain what the record is for the time between Army parachute jumps, but Lt. Col. John Hall may hold it at 30 years and six months.

When Hall parachuted from a military aircraft last month, it was the first time he had done so in more than 30 years. Hall, a 53-year-old school teacher at Kearsley High School in Flint, Michigan, is serving a one-year tour of duty in Vicenza, Italy, as the public affairs officer for the storied 173rd Airborne Brigade, the contingency response force for U.S. Army Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

"I first worked with the 173rd Airborne when I was put on active duty with the Michigan National Guard in 2014 and sent to the Baltic Countries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve and in support of Latvia, our State Partnership Nation," Hall said. "The 173rd Airborne Public Affairs leaders and I developed a close working relationship, so last summer when they needed an experienced public affairs officer to lead their team, I was selected and put on orders."

The 173rd Brigade commander sent word to Hall that he would be expected to jump from aircraft as a part of his duties.

"I was really excited and completely terrified at the same time. I graduated from 'jump school' when I was 19 years old and last jumped when I was 22, so I knew what to do," Hall said with a laugh.

The 173rd put Hall through a one-day airborne refresher course, he said. This training included parachute landing, actions in the aircraft and emergency procedures, followed by multiple jumps from a 34-foot tower in which his technique

was assessed.

The next day, Hall reported to Aviano Air Base in northern Italy, donned his parachute with a couple of hundred other Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, climbed aboard an Air Force C-17 aircraft and, when 1,200 feet over the Juliet Drop Zone, exited the door and tested his training.

"The jet blast spun me in the air so when my 'chute deployed it was pretty twisted and did not have a full canopy," Hall said. "I was surprised that I automatically reached up, pulled the 'risers' apart and worked the parachute fully open. Good training takes over and we automatically do the right thing. I then checked my position in the sky and prepared to land. It was all over in less than a minute. I took up a good parachute landing fall position and the landing was perfect."

Hall has served in the Army since graduating from Lakeville High School in the Flint area where he was an all-state wrestler, president of the school's student council and where he began dating his eventual wife, Laura.

"I enlisted as a combat medic when I was 19 years old and served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the mid-1980s, where we conducted frequent parachute operations as a part of our combat training," Hall said. "After leaving the 82nd, I didn't think I would ever jump from a military aircraft ever again."

Since leaving active duty with the 82nd, Hall has served in the Army Reserve, the Florida and Michigan

National Guard, and has been called back to active duty — to include combat duty in Iraq — on multiple occasions, but he has not been assigned to a unit with an airborne mission until now.

He was initially commissioned as a cavalry officer following officer candidate school and served as a Scout Platoon Leader in E Troop, 153rd Cavalry Regiment in Ocala, Florida. His later assignments include company commander in the 1-125 Infantry in Flint, Michigan, as well as executive officer and commander of the 126th Press Camp Headquarters at Fort Custer, Michigan. It was in the 126th PCH that Hall served a combat tour in Baghdad.

Oddly enough, while serving as a press officer for Multinational Forces Iraq, Hall was serving in a combat zone at the same time as his daughter, Savannah, who had recently been commissioned as an officer through the University of Michigan ROTC program.

"My daughter, Savannah, grew up around the Army and has seen me in uniform since I was in the 82nd Airborne," Hall said. "She decided when she went to college that she wanted to enroll in ROTC, serve in the Army and be a paratrooper. It was indeed a proud moment when I pinned her 'Jump Wings' on her at Fort Benning, Georgia. And now my youngest daughter, Samantha, is shipping off to Army basic training later this spring. It remains to be

seen if she, too, will become a paratrooper."

Hall has been working in Vicenza, Italy, on the senior staff of the 173rd Airborne Brigade since August 2017. In this short time, he has supported airborne combat training in Latvia, Germany, Slovenia, a historic mission to Serbia, mountaineering training with the Italian Alpini Brigade, and next week will travel to Toulouse, France, to support 173rd Airborne combined engineering operations with French paratroopers.

"The operational tempo here at the 173rd Airborne is intense. We continually have combat training going on with our NATO allies throughout Europe," Hall said.

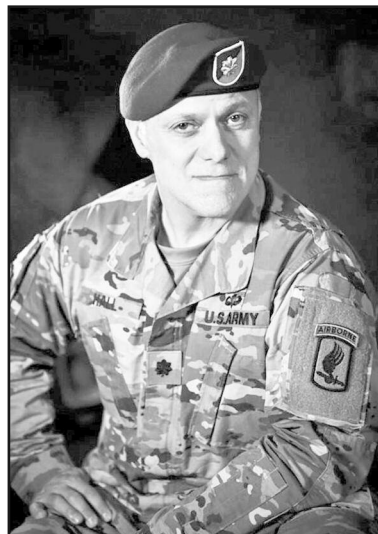
"Our command philosophy is that we are always 'preparing our Soldiers for the unforgiving crucible of ground combat.'"

A significant part of this, in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, is conducting airborne operations, so Hall will complete several more jumps from military aircraft in the coming months.

As far as teaching is concerned, Hall intends to return to the classroom teaching English, history and theater for the fall 2018 semester. It is certain that the dynamic training and real-world experiences contribute to his classes and his students' enthusiasm.

Until then, Hall is an Army paratrooper and he said he's proud of the Soldiers he works with.

Hall added, "It is truly an honor to be able to serve with the 'Sky Soldiers' of the 173rd. To be able to begin my military career with the 82nd Airborne Division and end it with the 173rd is remarkable. I am humbled every day by the discipline, determination and dedication of these young Americans forward stationed and always prepared to defend their country."



Staff Sgt. ALEXANDER C. HENNINGER/173rd ABNE BDE

Hall

Fight

Continued from page 13

Soldiers; they still carried their nickname from New York, the Black Rattlers, and carried their regimental flag of the 15th New York Infantry everywhere they went in France. While the 369th Infantry would become part of the U.S. Army's 92nd Infantry Division, it would be assigned to fight with French forces. This solved the dilemma for Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces of what to do with the African-American troops. The black troops would see combat, but alongside French forces, who were accustomed to the many races and ethnicities already serving in the ranks of their colonial troops. "The French army instructors literally welcomed their African-American trainees as comrades in arms," Sammons wrote.

"To the pragmatic French army instructors, the

Soldiers were Americans, black Americans, to be trained for combat within their ranks. The trainees clearly excelled at their tasks."

After learning valuable lessons in trench warfare from their French partners, the Soldiers of the 369th finally had their chance to prove their worth as combat troops when they entered the front lines, holding their line against the last German spring offensive near Chateau-Thierry.

Acclaimed fighters

Their value was not lost on the French, and the regiment continued to fight alongside French forces, participating in the Aisne-Marne counteroffensive in the summer of 1918 alongside the French 162nd Infantry Division.

The Hell Fighters from Harlem had come into their own, in spite of their difficult start. The reg-

iment would go on to prove itself in combat operations throughout the rest of the war, receiving France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre, for its unit actions alongside some 171 individual decorations for heroism.

**Black History Month
celebration**

Feb. 22, 11 a.m.

Warrior Community Center

Caring for skin goes deeper than applying lotion

MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — When a cold snap takes over, people quickly feel the effects of dry hair and itchy skin or they can get a rash. Protecting from harmful sunburn or improving skin's appearance can be other common skin concerns. But in a dermatologist's world, that's not all there is to skin.

When Army Col. Jon Meyerle returned from Kuwait in 2008, a significant number of wounded service members were arriving at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center who had survived the war but lost limbs. The director at Walter Reed's Military Advanced Training Center, or MATC, sought his input as a dermatologist to successfully outfit amputees with the latest in prosthetics.

"It was my first exposure to amputee care," Meyerle said. "A high percentage of people with lower extremity amputations suffer from skin disease and are unable to wear prosthetics due to skin breakdown at the stump site from bearing weight."

Meyerle says amputees can have issues with sweating, skin breakdown, ulcers and allergic reactions to prosthetic socket material. Stump skin may undergo other changes due to a poorly fitting prosthesis. In his research, Meyerle is looking for ways to make the amputee stump skin more like skin on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.

"If you can toughen that skin, you can make the stump more resistant to the friction, heat and other irritants that you're exposed to when you're wearing a prosthesis," said Meyerle, who uses the full arsenal of cosmetic and dermatological tools at his disposal. These include injecting Botox at the stump site to stop sweating, and using laser hair removal to reduce hair growth and help the prosthesis socket fit better.

"Wearing a prosthesis requires the kind of skin care someone in a tropical environment needs when wearing boots all the time," he said.

Meyerle's specialty is treating autoimmune disorders of the skin that result in blistering, medical dermatology conditions, and skin cancer — these areas are his primary research focus, along with work on amputee skin care, teledermatology, and standardized body scan imaging.

"Dermatologists see men, women, old, young, and every age in between," said Meyerle. "People come to look younger with Botox, fillers or other cosmetic procedures, like getting rid of spider veins."

He identified warts, acne and eczema as common reasons people pursue treatment, and said children see dermatologists for vascular malformations, like a birth mark. Most often, older people see dermatologists for various skin diseases, skin cancer and pre-cancer, he said.

According to Meyerle, dermatologists eyeball the skin for moles that "don't fit." If they see a concerning one, dermatologists often will view it

under magnification with a dermatoscope. Meyerle's research with standardized imaging is a potential diagnostic aid that could help identify high-risk lesions.

"The promise of standardized skin imaging is tracking people over time," said Meyerle. "If lesions or moles change, an imaging machine can tell you what is new or different. Comparing images allows you to continue monitoring or to do a biopsy. Imaging means fewer dermatologists can do the work of many," he added.

Without skin imaging widely available to patients, moles on the skin must be visually monitored. Meyerle says patients can do monthly self-skin examinations by following "the ABCDE rule," which stands for asymmetry, border, color, diameter, and evolution. While doing self-scans, Meyerle recommends looking for uneven moles — those with a jagged edge, atypical colors, or multiple colors, or moles larger than a pencil eraser. Meyerle says keeping an eye on moles that change over time is particularly important.

"People can get new moles until their 50s," he said. "So, just because you get a new mole, that doesn't mean it is concerning."

Meyerle said moles do change over time. They can lose pigment; become more raised or elevated; and in women, they can change during pregnancy. Recognizing bad moles is a process of pattern recognition. It's also one of many ways a military dermatologist stands on guard for patient health and well-being.

Take advantage of Fort Polk Tax Center's full service tax preparation

By Capt. MATTHEW BISHOP
Fort Polk Tax Center

FORT POLK, La. — With tax season fully underway, don't procrastinate. Head straight to the Fort Polk Installation Tax Center located in bldg 2502 at the corner of Alabama Avenue and 23rd Street on South Fort Polk, to get them done now.

Sure, you could go to one of the places off post who claim to do "free" tax preparation. But why spend your hard earned money or give your Social Security number to some unknown person off post when you could get them done for free right here?

Not only is the service free to active duty Soldiers, active Reservists, retirees, and Family members, but the taxes are prepared and reviewed by 10 competent Soldiers who have taken a course given by the IRS and are certified by the IRS to prepare basic, advanced and military tax returns.

The Tax Center also files both federal and state tax returns, a true, one-stop shop.

The Tax Center remains open until April 17. Hours are from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Wednesday and Fridays from noon-7 p.m. Thursdays, and from 9 a.m.-noon on Saturdays (by appointment only).

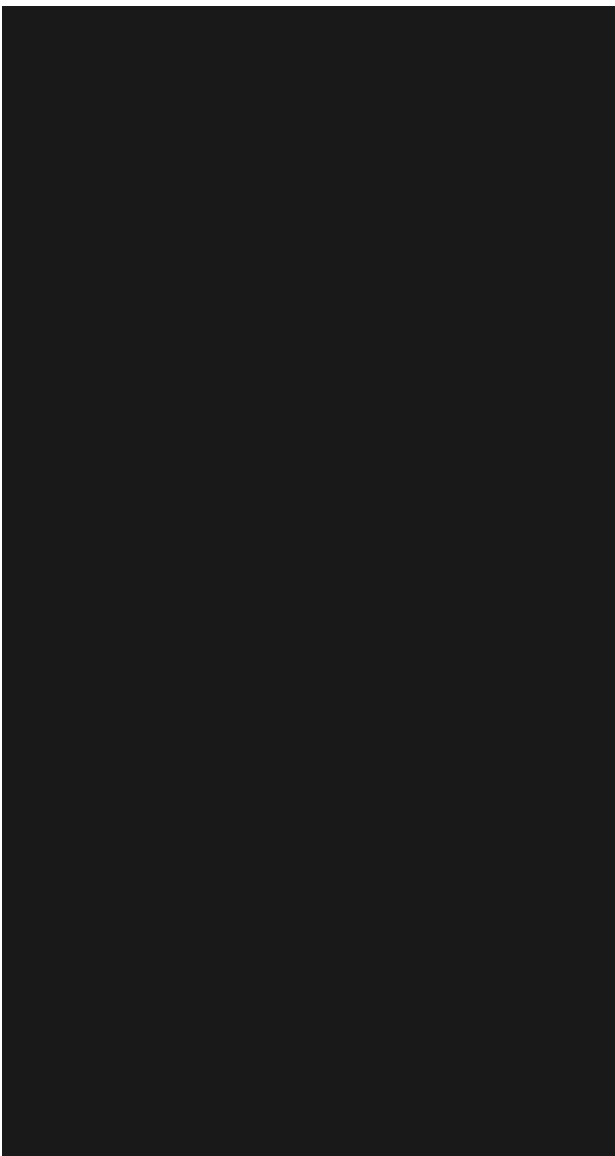
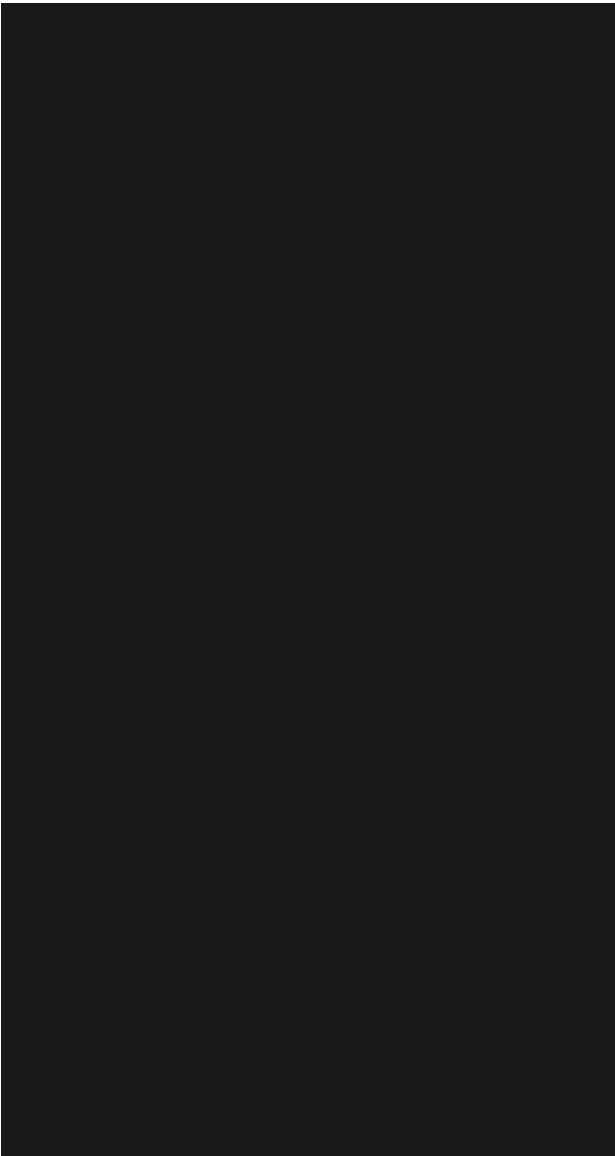
To maximize your time efficiency, schedule an appointment by calling 531-1040. And new this year, you can also schedule an appointment by emailing ftpoltax@gmail.com. You can also follow us on **Twitter @ftpoltax**.

When it is time for your appointment, you should bring the following documents to make the process as smooth as possible:

- Social Security cards for yourself, your spouse and all dependents you intend to claim.
 - Last year's federal and state tax return
 - All four original copies of W-2s and 1099-Rs as well as copies of any other statements of income such as 1099-INT (interest income), 1099-G (unemployment and disability) or SSA-1099 (Social Security Benefits). If you did a DITY or PPM move in the last year, you should get two W-2s. Active duty W-2s will be available on DFAS on Jan. 20 and Travel W-2s will be available on Jan. 31.
 - A canceled check so that the refund can be directly deposited into your account.
 - Form 1098 if you received any mortgage interest.
 - Form 1098-T, if you attended a university or college. Also bring your student registration for itemized expenses paid and any loans/grants that were to be applied.
 - If you're claiming an exemption for a person who is in someone else's legal custody, you will need IRS Form 8332 signed by the custodial person saying you may claim the exemption.
 - Any receipts or letters for any charitable contributions.
 - Your spouse if you plan to file jointly. A valid power of attorney or IRS Form 2848 is needed if you intend to file jointly with your spouse and he or she cannot be present (for instance, if he or she is deployed).
 - Any other documents you think may be necessary for your return. The center's qualified tax preparers can help you decide what is relevant.
- Try not to wait until April to schedule an appointment. Remember, the earlier you get your

taxes done, the earlier you can get your refund.

With free services and an expert staff at the Fort Polk installation tax center, you have no excuse not to get your taxes done. So set up your appointment today.



Rest & Relaxation

Lagniappe

Bass tournament

Fish the first Saturday of each month from safelight to 3 p.m. as the Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation hosts a fishing tournament at Fort Polk's Toledo Bend Recreation Site.

The next tournament is held March 3. Cost is \$40 per boat, two people per boat. Payout is 80 percent of the entry fees. The tournament requires a minimum of five boats.

Patrons can also participate in the Big Bass Contest. Entry for the contest is \$5 per person, and payout is 100 percent of the entry fees. For more information call (888) 718-9088.

Fishing class

Toledo Bend Recreation Site hosts a fishing class Wednesday, Feb. 24 and March 10.

The class is free and geared toward those new to the area who want to learn basic fishing tips on Toledo Bend Lake. Participants will learn to locate fish, bait, gear, tackle and equipment. For more information call (888) 718-9088.

Bowling league

A military spouse breakfast bowling league, held at Fort Polk's Strike Zone Bowling Center, is held each Wednesday at 10 a.m. and lasts for the next 11 weeks. The league is open to all active duty and retired military spouses. The cost is \$9 per week. For more information call 531-6273.

Lose weight

Join Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) every Thursday at the Vernon Parish Library meeting room. Weigh in from 5-5:50 p.m. The meeting starts at 5:50 p.m. For more information call (337) 208-0896.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Check out Navy history in Lake Charles

[HTTPS://ORLECK.ORG](https://orleck.org)

LAKE CHARLES, La. — If you are a military history buff, you won't want to miss the chance to visit the USS Orleck, docked in Lake Charles.

The USS ORLECK DD 886 is a Gearing Class Destroyer commissioned as a United States warship on September 15, 1945, and decommissioned on October 1, 1982. It is the Official Vietnam Memorial Museum Ship for the State of Louisiana.

Once decommissioned, the Orleck was transferred to the Turkish Navy where she operated for 16 additional years, after providing 37 years of meritorious service in the U.S. Navy in Korea and Vietnam.

In the Vietnam conflict she fought in 14 of the 17 official Vietnam campaigns, was present in enemy waters 29 times and fired more rounds of ammunition in support of ground troops than any other such ship and in one campaign. She fired more than 11,000 rounds, creating such intense heat that her gun mounts had to be replaced.

The Orleck was known by those who witnessed her presence in Vietnamese waters as "The Grey Ghost of the Vietnam Coast" and recognized as "Top Gun" of the Seventh Fleet in Vietnam. The Orleck is the most decorated ship afloat in the United States Navy that served in Vietnam.

The Orleck is also the site of the USS Radford Museum collection.

The Radford operated with a crew of about 300 men who maintained the ship

and manned her weapons of war in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

She was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for valor and 26 battle stars for war time actions. She earned numerous other decorations and awards during her years of service.

The Radford crew rescued 468 sailors from the sea when the cruiser USS Helena was sunk in the WWII Battle of Kula Gulf. The Radford Museum sculpture "Deliverance" commemorates this heroism. The Radford received 12 battle stars for World War II service, 5 battle stars for the Korean War, 4 for the Vietnam War, and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

The ship was decommissioned in 1969 and later sold for scrap, but she lives on in history, at the Radford Museum.

USS Orleck hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The last tour begins at 2 p.m. The Orleck is open Saturdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The last tour begins at 3 p.m.

Admission for children ages 5 and under is free; ages 6 to 12 is \$5 per youth; ages 13-59 is \$10 per adult and ages 60 or more is \$8 per senior. Active military with an ID are admitted for \$5 per person.

To reach the Orleck when traveling west on Interstate 10, exit 31A (North Enterprise Blvd) and take a right. Continue over the railroad overpass for five short blocks. The entrance is on the left at Gieffer's Street.

For more information visit <https://orleck.org>.

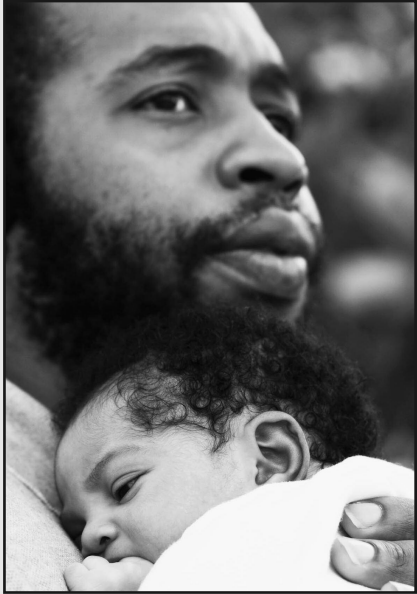
Take time to admire culture

AUDUBONNATUREINSTITUTE.ORG

NEW ORLEANS, La. — Talk to your elders, eat new food, dance to music you don't hear every day and embrace your culture and history in the process. Soul Fest — a celebration of African American food, music, crafts and culture that also highlights the achievements and heritage of African Americans — held March 3 and 4 at the Audubon Zoo, New Orleans — does just that. More than 20,000 visitors will converge on the zoo for one of New Orleans' biggest celebrations of African American history.

The two day family-oriented event features live musical performances by local jazz, rhythm and blues and gospel artists. Local artisans showcase handmade crafts such as jewelry, art and more.

Restaurants and caterers specializing in Creole cuisine and



authentic soul food offer tasty dishes such as smothered pork chops, greens, pork chop po-boys, sweet potato pies and other treats.

For more information on Soul Fest visit their website at www.auduboninstitute.org.

Head to Mardi Gras celebrations

GUARDIAN STAFF

ALEXANDRIA, La. — Mardi Gras season is almost over for another year. Head out and experience some fun while you still can at the following parades.

• **Today** — Hixson Classic Cars and College Cheerleaders parade, 4:30 p.m., downtown Alexandria.

• **Saturday** — Leesville Mardi Gras festivities from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Polk Theater in Leesville on Texas and Fourth streets and the parade, 2 p.m., along Third Street from north to south, downtown Leesville.

• **Saturday** — Enjoy the Alexandria Mardi Gras Association's 22nd annual children's parade, 10 a.m.,

downtown Alexandria.

• **Saturday** — Mardi Gras at the Zoo, 2-4 p.m., Alexandria Zoological Park.

• **Saturday** — Krewe of Barkus Mardi Gras parade, 3 p.m. at the Lake Charles Civic Center.

• **Sunday** — Alexandria Mardi Gras Association 25th annual Krewes Parade, 2 p.m., begins at Texas Avenue then continues down Masonic Drive, Memorial Drive, North Boulevard and ends at the Alexandria Mall.

For more information and the most updated events schedule visit www.alexmardigras.com calendar or the Alexandria-Pineville Convention & Visitors Bureau website at www.alexandriapineville.com.



Prepare for planting season with petals at peak of perfection

By **ANGIE THORNE**
Guardian staff writer

FOREST HILL, La. — It may still be a bit chilly out there, but buds on branches and a slight warming trend, among other signs, are heralding the coming of spring. If you love everything the season brings, including a burst of new growth on trees and colorful flowers spilling over beds, baskets and pots, then don't miss the Louisiana Nursery Festival held March 16-18 in downtown Forest Hill — about an hour from Fort Polk.

The festival features nursery vendors, carnival rides, entertainment, food and arts and crafts. Gates open from 8 a.m.-midnight March 16, 10 a.m.-midnight March 17 and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. March 18.

After looking around the booths offering a wide variety of hand-made crafts and other wares, enjoy a few carnival rides and then get down to the business of checking out the real reason you are there — plants. There's no doubt it's going to be hard to decide when choosing

from all the beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees strategically on display as they line the outer perimeter of the grounds.

You'll find everything from petunias, marigolds and other spring annuals to oak, birch, apple, pear, citrus and other varieties of trees. Shrubs include everything from azaleas to boxwood and more.

If you plan to buy your spring planting materials at the festival, start planning your landscape goals now. Figure out how many flats of flowers it will take to fill that flowerbed or large pots lining the porch.

Think about and decide on a color scheme for spring. Will it be pinks and purples, reds and oranges, whites and yellows or some other combination of them all? If shrubs are the focus, determine how many you'll need in advance.

Most shrubs should be planted at least two feet apart depending on whether you want the shrub to grow into a hedge or stay separated once full grown — adjust your count accordingly. Different sizes



come with different prices. Small shrubs have a smaller price tag, but you'll have to wait a few years for them to reach their full potential. Going for the larger tree or shrub means a higher price, but a more instant and finished looking landscape. Deciding now and walking in

with a budget will mean a more successful and less stressful festival experience.

In addition to the plants, everything from garden tools to heavy-duty equipment will be on display.

For more information call (318) 452-2362.

File flower information away

GUARDIAN STAFF

FORT POLK, La. — From fragrant to scent-free, modest to showy, flowers have been around for a long time.

That means there's a lot of information and trivia to learn about these beautiful plants.

Here are just a few tidbits found at www.the-flowerexpert.com.

- **Archaeofructus sinensis** — is considered the world's oldest flower. Scientists discovered the flower fossil in northeast China, dating back 125 million years. The fossilized flower resembled the modern water lily.

- **Agave** — the agave flower stem is fermented to make the popular Northern Mexican wine called Pulque.

- **Bluebonnet** — After it rains, a drop of water stays in each bonnet or bowl-like petal of the bluebonnet.

- **Buddha** — the lotus flower is symbolized with this religious figure.

- **Carnations** — are the best selling cut flowers

around the world and they were the flower distributed on the first celebration of Mother's Day.

- **Chrysanthemum** — the flower has been known for more than 5,000 years in a small yellow form. Some countries (such as Malta) believe that it is unlucky to have the flower indoors. It is associated with funerals and All Saints Day. But, feng shui adherents believe the chrysanthemum brings laughter and happiness to your home.

- **Daffodils** — the flower's sap contains sharp crystals that protect it from grazing animals.

- **Easter lily** — is the traditional flower of Easter and is a joyful symbol of beauty, hope and life.

- **Forget-Me-Not** — This flower symbolizes true love and memories.

- **Hibiscus** — is referred to as the Queen of the Tropics.

- **Netherlands** — is the country that leads on exports of cut flowers.

- **Yellow roses** — symbolizes friendship.